

Join the Cooperative Action Network

DECEMBER 2013 A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Alabama

LIVING

Central Alabama
Electric
COOPERATIVE

Bibb County
A County as Strong
as Iron

Save During the Holidays!
Co-op Connections
Card Listing Inside!





ON THE COVER:
The Cahaba River is a
lifeline of Bibb County



4 Make Your Voice Heard

Working together to keep
power affordable



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We Need an All-of-The-Above Energy Strategy

Electric cooperatives are disappointed that in September the Administration officially abandoned an all-of-the-above energy strategy for an approach effectively removing coal from the nation's fuel mix in the future.

Over the years the industry has developed a balance of fuel sources to generate the electric power needed to deliver to consumers, including coal, nuclear, natural gas, hydro and other renewables like solar and wind.

The policy, proposed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), sets stringent limits on carbon dioxide emissions from future coal or natural gas plants, which makes up two thirds of the power generated in the U.S. Trouble is, the new standards are impossible to meet with existing technology.

For several years co-ops and other utilities have tested carbon capture and storage (CCS) as a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Unfortunately, the technology doesn't make financial sense. It has never been used at a commercial scale at a power plant over a prolonged period to demonstrate its viability or cost. In a 2012 Congressional Budget Office report, engineers estimate it would increase the cost of producing electricity from coal-based plants by 75 percent.

The Administration's switch to an all-but-one energy approach would limit Americans' access to a plentiful and affordable resource. I don't make this statement from a political standpoint, but simply from a business approach. Limiting energy fuel sources and adding cost to consumers without creating any benefit does not make good business sense.

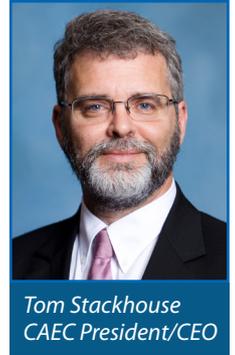
Already worried about making ends meet, many of our members cannot afford the significant increases in electric bills that this policy would trigger.

Historically, the price of coal remains affordable and relatively stable. The U.S. Energy Information Agency reports the U.S. has 236 years remaining of recoverable coal reserves. Coal generates 37 percent of the nation's electricity—our biggest energy source by far—and today's coal plants are a cleaner source of generation than ever before.

It seems history is being allowed to repeat itself. We saw this all-but-one game in 1978 when Congress passed the ill-conceived Power Plant and Industrial Fuel Use Act. Never heard of it? Few have, but for several years the government banned natural gas for power generation. Yes, natural gas—the fuel source being sold to the nation today as a cleaner fuel option. With gas off the table, electric co-ops were forced to choose between building coal or nuclear plants.

Back then, the industry, especially co-ops, was in the midst of a major power plant building cycle as electricity needs were escalating due to an expanding economy. With few options, they invested heavily in coal-based generating plants in the late 1970s and early 1980s because the federal government had also made nuclear a nearly impossible alternative. Thankfully Congress repealed its mistake, but not for nine years and not until long-term coal commitments had been made. It is frustrating to see how unintended consequences from regulations can cause American consumers to pay more than necessary—especially when there are commonsense solutions.

Let's not repeat past mistakes. Stand with us as we fight to keep electric bills affordable. Raise your voice through the Cooperative Action Network at www.action.coop. Please go online and tell the EPA we need an all-of-the-above energy strategy. ■



Tom Stackhouse
CAEC President/CEO

1 Million Voices through the Cooperative Action Network

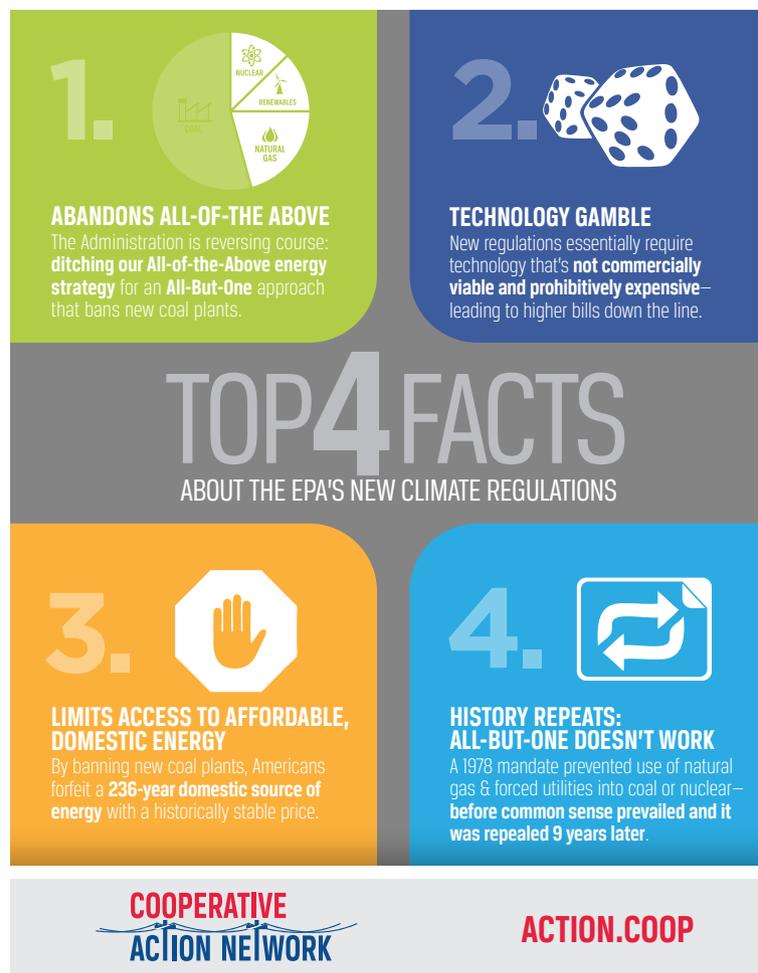
As a cooperative, we have a deep history of action and accomplishments through grassroots efforts. From our formation by central-Alabama residents 75 years ago, to making sure our members' voices are heard when it comes to issues that directly impact both the electricity they receive and the price they pay for it, we recognize the power that can come from individuals on a local level.

In the past, we asked you to contact your representatives in Washington D.C. through the Our Energy, Our Future grassroots campaign. CAEC members sent nearly 10,000 messages and nationwide, members sent about 3.5 million messages through emails and letters to members of Congress asking for a fair and balanced energy mix for our future.

Today, we are building from that success through a new grassroots movement via the Cooperative Action Network and the website Action.coop. In addition to maintaining contact with our elected officials, the Cooperative Action Network also has the immediate goal of sending 1 million emails and letters to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in regard to current proposed rules and regulations tied to future and existing coal-generation power plants

The proposed EPA rule sets stringent limits on coal plants by requiring the use of carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) technology, which is not commercially viable yet. This requirement would eliminate coal as a fuel source for current and future plants - abandoning an "all-of-the above" energy strategy by effectively preventing construction of new coal-based generation. Coal is cleaner now than it has ever been and utilities have spent billions of dollars in recent years upgrading existing plants. Fuel diversity is key for maintaining stable electricity rates.

We strongly oppose this shift and believe the proposed rule should be withdrawn. We support using a diverse fuel mix including renewables, natural gas, nuclear and coal to generate electricity, and support using demand response and energy efficiency to use that energy wisely. Co-ops also continue to deploy new



1. ABANDONS ALL-OF-THE ABOVE
The Administration is reversing course: ditching our All-of-the-Above energy strategy for an All-But-One approach that bans new coal plants.

2. TECHNOLOGY GAMBLE
New regulations essentially require technology that's **not commercially viable and prohibitively expensive**—leading to higher bills down the line.

TOP 4 FACTS
ABOUT THE EPA'S NEW CLIMATE REGULATIONS

3. LIMITS ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, DOMESTIC ENERGY
By banning new coal plants, Americans forfeit a **236-year domestic source of energy** with a historically stable price.

4. HISTORY REPEATS: ALL-BUT-ONE DOESN'T WORK
A 1978 mandate prevented use of natural gas & forced utilities into coal or nuclear—before common sense prevailed and it was repealed 9 years later.

COOPERATIVE ACTION NETWORK **ACTION.COOP**

technologies and are researching even more cutting edge technologies to meet the energy needs of the future.

We can't do it alone, we need your help. By visiting Action.coop, you can quickly and easily submit your concerns to the EPA about how these new rules and regulations will affect the price you pay for power as well as reliability. By making our voice heard, we hope to have a seat at the table and work with the EPA to develop a strategy that keeps quality, reliability and price in mind. To do this, we have a goal of 1 million forms of communication to be sent to the EPA by March, 2014. Will you help us? Visit Action.coop today or fill out the form on page 35 of this magazine and be one in a million as we work to keep our energy mix one that is "all of the above" not "an all but one" generation strategy. ■

Bibb County

As the location for some of the earliest steel industry structures in the state, Bibb County has transformed itself from a land of coal and ore to one of history and nature and has proved itself to be as resilient as the steel and iron it helped to produce.

Located on 399,980 acres encompassing 625 square miles and home to approximately 22,000 people, the land was known by the Choctaw as Cahawba, meaning “the river above,” and served as the dividing line between the Creek and Choctaw nations. In 1814, the native population was removed by Andrew Jackson, opening up the land for settlers who were attracted by the fertile land valleys adjacent to the Cahaba River. Territorial Governor William Wyatt Bibb formed the county of Cahawba in 1818 which was later renamed in his honor to Bibb County.

Settlers focused on small farms growing mostly corn, rye and potatoes and raising livestock, but the county soon became an active part of the steel industry due to its vast deposits of coal. In the 1830’s, Daniel Hillman, an ironmaster from Pennsylvania, constructed a forge on Roupes Creek near present day Woodstock. Hillman

died two years later and the forge was taken over by Ninian Tannehill. Between 1859 and 1863, three tall furnaces were built as Tannehill became a major supplier

of pig iron for the Confederate Army. In 1862, Brierfield Ironworks in northern Bibb County was also built to serve the South, making it one of the largest producers of iron in the state. During this time the county’s forges,

furnaces and mills shipped iron by rail to Selma to be specifically used for the production of the Brooke Cannon, the largest cannon in the Confederate arsenal, until the Union and Wilson’s Raiders swept through the area in 1865, destroying the Brierfield and Tannehill furnaces and mills.

Brierfield reopened intermittently for several years until it closed permanently on Dec. 24, 1894. Today, Tannehill and Brierfield are popular state parks where you can see

the remains of the once great furnaces and historic structures, hike trails, camp and enjoy seasonal activities.

The city of West Blocton also has its roots in the steel industry and served as a hub for other smaller mining towns such as Piper, Marvel and Lucile. In 1884, coal miners found a huge, one-ton block of coal which the miners used as inspiration for the name of a nearby settlement—Blockton. The “k” was later removed by the post office as to not be confused with New Brockton in southeast Alabama. The coal from the Blocton mines was in such high demand, it attracted miners from Belgium, Italy, Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria. Today this influence can be found in the city’s Italian Catholic Cemetery with its Italian engraved headstones. Just outside of the city sits the West Blocton Coke Ovens State Park. The dome-like structures were built to produce coke, a fuel and reducing agent used for the smelting of iron ore in blast furnaces, such as those found at Brierfield and Tannehill. The ovens, which numbered up to 467 at one time, were abandoned in 1909 and can be visited today.

The city of Centreville was founded in 1823 and serves as the county seat and is home to a historic dis-



You can explore the remains of the West Blocton Coke Ovens, which were built in the late 1880s



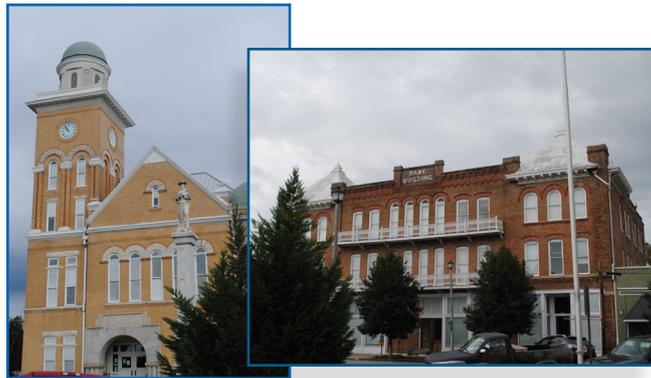
The remains of the furnace is one of many attractions at Brierfield State Park

tract with restored homes and buildings such as the fifth and current courthouse for Bibb County which was built in 1902. On the square is also the Bibb County Banking and Trust Building, constructed in 1899, which served as home to a bank, a post office and hotel.

Adjacent to Centreville is the city of Brent. Founded in 1898 along the Gulf, Mobile and Ohio rail line, today it is the largest municipality in the county. In 1973, a category 4 tornado destroyed 90 percent of the city; demolishing 12,000 acres of timber and more than 500 buildings. Citizens rallied together and rebuilt the city, while adopting the city motto: Proven by tempest.

On April 27, 2011, the county was hit during the infamous tornado outbreak that swept across the state. The EF3 tornado that ripped across the county destroyed many facilities at the Bibb County Lake, a popular destination for anglers, and also hit the town of Eoline—destroying the town's fire department, businesses and homes and causing one fatality—before finally ending near the town of Marvel.

Running through the county, the Cahaba River is the longest free-flowing stream in Alabama winding more than 190 miles. The river currently supports 64 rare and imperiled plant and animal species, 13 of which are found nowhere else in the world, and it has more fish species, at 131, than any other river its size in North America. The Cahaba River National Wildlife Refuge is one of the nation's newest National Wildlife Refuges and sits on 3,500 acres. Located on seven miles of the Cahaba River, it is home to five federally listed species including the Cahaba shiner, goldmine darter, round rock snail and the cylindrical lioplax snail and it also features the largest population of Cahaba Lilies in North



The Bibb County Courthouse and Bibb County Banking and Trust building are two of many places in Centreville's historic district

America which is celebrated each May-June during the Cahaba Lily Festival.

Another rare and endangered species, the red-cockaded woodpecker is found in the forests of Bibb County. Bird watchers might catch a glimpse of the rare bird (only about 14,000 birds can be found across the country) in its native habitat of the long-

leaf pine. With National Forest lands, including the Talladega National Forest, encompassing 15 percent of the county, and one of the state's largest contiguous longleaf forests, it is a welcoming place for both the rare bird and birdwatchers alike.

Arts such as woodworking, quilting, pottery and syrup making are dotted throughout the county with several events and craft shows throughout the year. Today, the timber industry is prominent with more than 15 timber and logging companies, and families are finding the beauty of the county a place to call home.

Founded by steel and coal, Bibb County finds itself as a place of nature, preservation and economic growth. ■



The Cahaba Lily flourishes at the Cahaba River National Wildlife Refuge

Photo by Paul Freeman

There's a Payment Option for Everyone

In today's fast-paced world, we all need a convenient way to pay our bills that fits our lifestyle. That's why CAEC offers several payment options to pay your power bill, whether it's by the click of a mouse or in person.

Prepay

Prepay is just what it sounds like, paying for electricity prior to its consumption. Prepay members can make payments at any of CAEC's service centers, by phone or through the Web. Payments are automatically applied, and notifications for daily balances and low balances can be sent a number of ways—through a phone call, text message or e-mail—at the time of day or night that you choose.

24-7 Service

Access your account by dialing 1-800-545-5735 and have your CAEC account number available as well as your credit/debit card information. You can also have 24/7 convenience via our website www.caec.coop or our mobile app and pay by either E-Check or debit/credit card.



Bank Draft

Your bill is automatically deducted from your checking account on the due date shown on your bill, ensuring prompt payment on your account.

Levelized Billing

Levelized billing prevents drastic changes in your bill, even in the coldest or hottest months of the year. A levelized bill is based on the average usage for 12 months so the levelized amount will change slightly each month. You're eligible to participate if CAEC has provided power to your home for at least six months.

E-Bill

Instead of receiving a paper bill, we will send your bill by e-mail at the same time of the month as you presently receive your bill. E-Bill can be combined with any of our other payment options such as Bank Draft, Online and Levelized billing.

In Person

Payments can be made in person at any of our four service centers located in Clanton, Prattville, Rockford and Wetumpka, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. The Clanton, Rockford and Wetumpka service centers open at 7:30 a.m., close from noon to 1 p.m. and close for business at 4:30 p.m. The Prattville office offers lobby service during the regular business hours of 7:30 a.m. through 4:30 p.m. We also have three authorized payment centers located at both Hancock Bank locations in Prattville and the Maplesville Supermarket.

To learn more about or to sign up for any of these payment choices, call us at 1-800-545-5735 and find the option that works best for you! ■

Christmas Tree Recycling

Through a partnership with CAEC and Winn Dixie grocery stores, you can keep your live Christmas tree green long after all your holiday decorations have been put away—by recycling it. Live Christmas trees can be dropped off at Winn Dixie store parking lots in Alexander City, Clanton, Millbrook, Prattville and Wetumpka, Dec. 23 through Jan. 2 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Trees must be undecorated, and can be left at the drop-off site in the stores' parking lots during the designated week.



**Offices will be closed Dec. 24 & 25 for Christmas
and Jan. 1 for New Year's Day**

Keep Safety on Display with Outdoor Lights

It seems that the light displays you see decorating homes during the holidays are getting bigger, brighter and more complex. Items such as inflatables, lighted figurines and light shows on a computerized musical display are becoming more common, but with all these added sights of the season, can come hidden electrical hazards.

To start, before you string up the first strand of lights, make sure lights and displays have been tested by a testing laboratory (such as Underwriter's Laboratory). Since we're talking about outdoor displays, all lights and extension cords should be made for outdoor use since indoor lights often have thinner insulation, which can become cracked and damaged when exposed to the elements outdoors. So make sure the ones you string up on the house belong out there.

Now that you have your decorations, take the time to do a pre-check. Modern lights have fused plugs, preventing sparks in case of a short circuit. Ditch old strands of lights that don't have fuses and get a set of newer, safer lights. Carefully inspect each electrical decoration and extension cord before use, and discard any damaged items. Cracked sockets, bare or frayed wires, and loose connections may cause a serious shock or fire. This is also a good time to ensure all bulbs are working, and replace those that aren't with an appropriate wattage bulb.

Your decorations aren't the only things you need to check. Since you're using electricity outdoors with the elements, make sure outdoor outlets are equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) to reduce the risks of shorts and shocks.

With your pre-check complete, think about where you're going to put your lights. Try to avoid putting lights and cords near dry, dead vegetation to avoid a potential fire. Another good area to avoid cords is high traffic areas such as sidewalks, where people could trip over them or driveways, where automobiles could drive over them and damage their casings. When running extension cords along the ground, you need to make sure to elevate

plugs and connectors with a brick to keep water and debris out of the connections.

When you begin hanging your lights, never tack, nail or screw through light cords to hang them, use an insulated hook instead. Also, don't pinch cords in windows or doors. As

you put up your twinkling lights, remember the power all around you and exercise extreme caution when decorating near overhead power lines. Use a wooden or fiberglass ladder instead of metal. Keep yourself and all of your equipment at least 10 feet from power lines.

Once you flip the switch and begin lighting up the night, keep an eye on any blown bulbs and do periodic checks of cords. Extension cords can overheat, so simply touch them and if they feel warm to the touch, unplug and replace it. If you leave the house, don't leave your lights on, and the same goes for when you go to sleep.

Holiday light shows are fun and enjoyed by all ages. Keep them safe and form lasting memories for your family, neighbors and anyone who passes by your home. ■



With holiday light shows becoming more complex; make sure you put safety first before you dazzle your friends and neighbors.



Darren Maddox is CAEC's Manager of Training and Safety

COOPERATIVE ACTION NETWORK

STAND WITH US
AS WE FIGHT
TO KEEP
ELECTRIC BILLS
AFFORDABLE.

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PLEASE PRINT

FIRST NAME _____ LAST NAME _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

HOME ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

HOME PHONE (_____) _____ MOBILE PHONE (_____) _____
SIGN UP FOR TEXT ALERTS

I AM A MEMBER OF _____ CO-OP/PPD

I authorize America's Electric Cooperatives to communicate on my behalf regarding America's electricity challenges.

SIGNATURE _____

Mail form to: Central Alabama Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 681570, Prattville, AL 36068